

THE VISITANT.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

Extract from a gentleman in Ontario county, to his friend.

"We recently formed a County Sabbath School Union under very favorable auspices. All seem now to feel the importance of Sabbath School instruction. We did not form our union auxiliary to the "Western Union," for we believed it better for us to hold our anniversaries within our vicinity: but be assured, we shall be ready at any time to cooperate with you in promoting the increase and improvement of Sabbath Schools throughout the whole western district. *We continue our schools in this village during the winter, for the first time. So far the school is better attended than during the summer, and we most cordially and earnestly recommend to all within our union, to continue their schools through the year. The monthly concert is well attended. Our teachers evidently grow more and more fond of their employment,—and with gratitude to God, I would add, more and more impressed with the conviction, that it is sacred and solemn business, attended with consequences of immediate and eternal interest. There is clearly an increased attention to these blessed institutions in this section of country: and, I would say, as a just tribute of respect to your flourishing school, I gathered much of my interest from an unexpected and providential interview with your beloved children. Go on in this noble cause. Remember you are engaged with the*

rising elements of future society. Under the blessing of God you may be doing more for the world than ten thousand of its proud legislators. While they frame their ineffectual penal statutes, you may render penal statutes useless, by spreading moral influence, and rendering crime unfrequent, if not unknown. While we regret that the day of our youth was not the day of Sabbath Schools, let us, to whom is entrusted the interests of these precious institutions, resolve, that another generation shall not number in our land, one child that cannot be taught the truth of God."

Extract from a gentleman in Onondaga county.

THE more I see of the influence of Sabbath Schools, and the more I reflect upon the subject, the more I am convinced that the institution is one of the most powerful engines ever put in operation for the overthrow of the kingdom of darkness. Indeed, the Prince of darkness himself seems aware of it; and while he would fain appear to despise so mild a foe, his writhing tells that he sensibly feels its sting."

FOR THE VISITANT.

THE following reflections are copied from the common-place book of a Sabbath School girl, aged thirteen years. Though they contain no new sentiment, they may, perhaps, be perused with interest by older Christians:

Reflections on the close of the year 1824.

What a mercy that I have been spared this year, while so many thousands have died, and that I have been fed, while so many have starved: that I have been clad, while others have wandered from door to door, and from place to place for clothing: that I have enjoyed the sweet privilege of a Sabbath School, while thousands more worthy than I have not. Have I been as thankful as I ought for all these blessings, of which so many have been deprived? Perhaps this year will be the last that I shall spend on earth; for I know not what a day may bring forth. Has my time been spent for my everlasting interest? Have I set my affections on things above, and not on things of the earth? I have lived to see many without hope and without God in the world, and am I not of that number? I have seen the consequences of dying in that state of mind, and is this not a sufficient warning? Has not Bethlehem's weeping babe arisen to be a mighty Prince and Savior to all who come to him? Does he not assure me that he will in no wise cast out those that come to him? Yes, I have seen this verified. I have seen a beloved school-mate snatched away by the ruthless hand of death, and in her expiring moments she enjoyed the assurance of a Savior's love. She died happy, even with joy beaming on her countenance. If I wish thus to die, I must choose that good part which little H "*****" did. If I wish to follow her to the regions above the sky, I must imitate her example; I must read and become acquainted with the word of God, and imitate all that is wise and amiable in the character of his children.

From the Auburn Free Press.

SUNDAY SCHOOL EXAMINATION.

It is highly interesting to observe, in this day of enterprize,

and of rapid improvement in the arts and sciences, that correspondent exertions are continually making for raising the standard of morality; and that there is almost daily springing into being some new, power-saving engine, for answering the great moral purposes of society. This remark I think cannot fail of being appreciated, by that part of our citizens, who witnessed the very interesting Sunday School examination, which recently took place in the court-house.

The institution of the Sunday School, even in its rudest state, has never failed to enlist the feelings of almost every individual who has become acquainted with its principles and its tendency. But for a few years past, its improvement and the spread of its interests have been unparalleled.—A tide of feeling has been poured forth from our principal cities, and is rapidly finding its way into every part of our country, mingling the good wishes of patriotism and philanthropy, with the prayers of piety, for the improvement of the young in this yet infant institution.

I have often witnessed Sunday School examinations, and marked their effect in exciting both teachers and scholars to increased diligence. I have seen in them the child of poverty and ignorance, whose vacant stare and unbecoming demeanour, but a few months before, could awaken no feeling but that of pity for his degradation. I have seen him, when reciting the truths of a pure and heavenly morality, evince a degree of intelligence and feeling which told the assembly that by such culture that mind might receive an impulse which would raise it to fill with

honor the most responsible stations in civil society. I have seen too, many of those, whose childhood & youth had never been blest with such advantages, and who, on account of their want of information, with respect to the object and the management of these schools, felt themselves justified in neglecting, if not in opposing them, now coming forward and giving their money and their influence for their support.—But I have never seen a Sunday School examination, where the glory of the institution was more happily exhibited, than in the one recently witnessed in our village.

In calling the attention of that portion of our citizens, who may condescend to read an article on a Sunday School examination, to a few remarks, I shall avoid all encomiums upon the diligence of the teachers, or the improvement of the scholars. The meed of praise was suitably awarded by the Reverend Gentleman who attended, and the responsive thrill of feeling manifested by the assembly, was a sufficient comment upon its justice.

The plan was admirably adapted to excite a high degree of interest; commencing with the creation of man, we were told, in the very language of scripture, of his primitive state, of his fall—of the promises of a Saviour—of his coming, character, precepts, examples, suffering, death, and resurrection, together with the general resurrection, general judgment, and the final destiny of men. These, I think, were the principal topics brought into view. Such subjects, introduced in such an order, and interspersed with agreeable reliefs of singing, and recitations of appropriate hymns,

could not fail of enkindling a bright and increasing glow of feeling, both in the school and the spectators.

But I hasten to a few remarks suggested by this examination. The first principle which I notice, is this:

The most useful portions of the Bible, are adapted to the capacities of children.

For myself, I was forcibly struck with this truth.—While the children were reciting that long selection of scripture, it all seemed like the diction of children, though the purity of the sentiment and the grandeur of the conceptions bespoke its heavenly origin. The poor do emphatically have the Gospel preached to them, when its heart cheering truths find access even to the minds of their children. Again it may be remarked,—

That moral improvement is the great object of the Sunday School.

A mere cultivation of the memory has often been looked upon as the highest object of juvenile instruction. But this examination has plainly evinced that children are capable of *thought* and *feeling*.

The manner in which the questions were asked and the answers given, clearly showed, that habits of reflection were forming in those young minds, while the trembling voice and starting tear, showed a moral sensibility, well calculated to carry reproof to many of maturer years, and more depraved feelings. But there is one consideration more, which multiplies a thousand fold, all the beneficial results of the Sunday School.

It is a truly Catholic institution.

It is presumed that there was not one sentiment uttered in that

examination, that every true Christian, of whatever denomination, could not heartily approve. Like the Bible Society, it is an institution that belongs to Protestants in general. It is no engine of sectarian zeal. And, as long as that plan is adhered to, which inculcates *only simple Bible truth*, so long will all who value the interests of society, and the cause of our common LORD, unite in promoting Sunday Schools.—Let every one among us, then, who feels for the reputation of our village, do something for its Sunday schools.—Let all parents, who find it difficult, amid their domestic cares, to thoroughly imbue the minds of their children with those truths, which are able to make them wise unto salvation, send them to the Sunday Schools.—And finally, let every Christian that makes *any pretensions* to love the souls of these dying immortals, pray for the Auburn Sunday Schools.

SPECTATOR.

SACRIFICES OF A SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

At the Sunday School Concert in Boston, for September last, Mr. H. a Superintendent, made the following remarks:

“The school of which I have the charge, has felt, in common with other schools, the effects of the season. During the summer, either for relaxation, or health, or business, it is so pleasant, and so necessary for almost all of us, to spend some time in the country, that the schools suffer considerably from the desultory attendance of the teachers. But the season is returning when the children and teachers are re-assembling; and I trust, it is for a steady and vigorous effort.

“While I am up, Sir, I will take the liberty to notice one or two topics of a general nature. One which I wish to mention is, the common manner of speaking of the *sacrifices* of Sabbath School teachers. Many times when our friends whom we highly respect, address us, we are told in strong language, how very great these sacrifices are, and how very heavy is the debt of gratitude due to us from the Christian public. When listening to strong representations of this kind, I have been induced to ask myself, “Whom does the man mean?” Not me surely: for I have never made any sacrifices, nor do I know of any one who has. Possibly, indeed, we may have sometimes omitted a meal, and perhaps some of us may have risen an hour earlier than we should have done, but for this employment. But we have not been hurt by the first, and the last was conducive to our health. There is no faithful, thorough teacher, who complains about sacrifices. He has to make some effort to be sure, but it is in a business where he is richly rewarded. If there are sacrifices suffered by any, it is by a different class of teachers; it is the half-day, the late-in-the-morning teacher, and he who does little while present, who groans under the endurance of so many burdens. To such, the business is a sacrifice, and it is no less a sacrifice to the business that they have any thing to do with it. I have at least two objections to the manner of speaking I have mentioned. One is, that it has a strong tendency to deprive us of that little humility which we possess; and which needs much more to be increased than diminished, to qualify us for our places. It

has a tendency to make us think we have done a great deal by way of supererogation, whereas there is not one of us, who has done half his duty. And it is better for us to be told so. As to obligation, possibly the families we instruct, and the world around us, may owe us something. But it is from their depravity, not our excellence. God owes us nothing, and our fellow Christians, if only they fill each his own station well, owe us nothing. Another objection, and it is one which in all cases is decisive, is, that this description of sacrifices is false. We have made no such sacrifices as are represented.

"During the past quarter, we have had a very solemn scene, in the death of one of our teachers. He was a young man of good education, and excellent understanding, and kind affections. But a blight passed over him, he faded and died; and we buried him beneath the clouds of the valley. He has not again mingled in our circle, and the little boys whom he taught, wait in vain for his appearance. The event ought to enforce on our minds this truth, that whatever our hands find to do in this service, we must do it with our might. For speedily our opportunity will be ended. We shall be taken from the children, or they will be taken from us, and nothing will remain but our account and our destiny....."

Another superintendent stated that their labors had been blessed in the case of one of their scholars, a Portuguese youth. He entered the school when he was thirteen years of age; being entirely ignorant of the letters of the alphabet. In the course of the year he was able to read in

the Bible. After an absence of two years he had returned to this city, and within the last few months, had been received into the church. The young man being present, on being invited, arose, and in a very appropriate and feeling manner, stated what the Lord had done for his soul. He regarded the instructions he received at the Sabbath School, not only as the means of his acquiring that knowledge which would be useful to him in this world, but also that knowledge, the possession of which is "eternal life." In the fulness of his heart he was led to exclaim "it is a blessed institution."

SABBATH SCHOOL SYSTEM.

In a retrospect of the past year, the editor of the Recorder and Telegraph has the following remarks:

The Sabbath School system will disappoint no good expectations that may be formed of it, if carried forward as a work of faith, by labors of love, in the patience of hope. No part of the great system of benevolent operation that characterizes the day, requires to its success a greater measure of patience; self-denial, and prayerfulness. Though less has been said on our pages of the movements of Sabbath schools than of some other labors of benevolence, it is not to be understood that those movements have been retarded, nor that they are to be overlooked in the contemplation of what God is doing to recover the world from the dominion of Satan. The system is every year advancing towards perfection, and laying a foundation for the purer faith and more animating hopes of future generations.

REVIVALS.

THE Recorder and Telegraph, in speaking of the revivals of the past year, has the following remarks:

In these seasons of revival, so much dreaded and opposed by the enemies of religion, the vicious have been reclaimed from courses which terminate in death, and have turned to the Lord with a full purpose of heart; the young and the old have prostrated themselves together before the cross of Christ; the new convert and the advanced believer have joined in the same songs of praise to redeeming mercy; and many a precious foretaste of the joys of heaven has been enjoyed in the sanctuary of God, in the social circle and in the closet. In one instance, every house, in a small town, became a house of prayer, and nearly every soul, of those arrived to years of reflection, a subject of converting grace. In instances too numerous to mention, old enmities have been annihilated between individuals and neighborhoods—backslidings healed—discord has yielded to brotherly love—and even the scoffing unbeliever has been compelled to exclaim, “See how these Christians love one another.”

REV. MR. OSGOOD.

In the London Evangelical Magazine for October, Rev. Mr. Osgood, agent for Sunday schools in Canada, acknowledges in behalf of those Schools, the receipt of 200 Bibles and 800 Testaments, from the British and Foreign Bible Society, 800 spelling-books from the Sunday School Society, and numerous donations in Books from other sources.

MISSION AT CEYLON.

The American mission at Ceylon has, within the past two years, been distinguished by repeated outpourings of the Holy Spirit, for which every pious heart ought to return thanks to God, while fervent prayers arise for the continued manifestations of divine grace, to those stations. In the month of January, 1825, forty-one individuals were admitted to the church of Christ, in the presence of 1200 or 1500 spectators.—Eighty-six persons then commemorated the Lord's Supper, seventy-three of whom were natives.

UTILITY OF RELIGIOUS NEWS-PAPERS.

A circumstance has lately occurred, says a correspondent of Zion's Herald, which renders your paper more valuable in my estimation than thousands of silver and gold. And although I am not accustomed to writing, yet I feel it my duty to request you to publish this scroll in the Herald, that its readers may thank God, take courage and rejoice with me. The following is the circumstance to which I allude:

I had a son who was once the pride of my heart, and whom I fondly thought would be the solace of my declining years. But he has for some time been addicted to the beastly habit of intemperance, with its train of evils, which had well nigh brought my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

About two months since, his children (of whom he has five) were reading in the Herald, an account of a revival of religion, written by the Rev. Lewis Bates, I think, in which he observed that lisping infants, as well as gray-

headed sinners, were converted to God. One of the children asked its poor mother whether they should be converted. She told them they would if they prayed to Jesus, and told them also that Jesus was once a child, and that when he became a man he took little children in his arms and blessed them; and that now he is in heaven, and hears his children when they pray, and answers them. "Then," said one of the children, "we will pray Jesus to convert our father, and make him steady, so that he may pray with us, and work and get bread and clothes for us, as grandpapa does." Accordingly next morning they began to pray; when in the midst of their exercises their wretched father awoke from his fit of intoxication, and heard his little innocents praying most earnestly to Jesus, "that he would convert his soul and make him a good father, so that he might not come home so wicked as he did last night, and beat their mother and them so badly."

Their words went like daggers to his heart, and he cried out in the bitterness of his soul, "Jesus have mercy on me—God be merciful to me the vilest of sinners." He immediately forsook his evil practices, set about the work of reformation in earnest, and is now a humble, penitent, praying soul. And I can say, as did one of my name of old, "Now, O Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

THE BIBLE AND SCHOOLS IN INDIA.

Prejudices are beginning to yield. At first it was a common remark of the Brahmins to the pa-

rents, "if you send your children to read the Testament, their eyes will drop out;" but this prejudice gave way. I have seen a little boy pointing a haughty priest to an image, while he exclaimed, "This is not a god—it is a devil." One boy, after being in the school a few months, on his return home was desired to join in some idolatrous ceremonies, which the natives use before their meals: the boy said he had scruples, and would not any more bow down to idols; the parents threatened to turn him out of the house; he replied, "Very well—when my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." He sought and found an asylum in the school, till his mother and father agreed to receive him again, tho' he would not worship their graven images. Three persons of the family have been brought to the knowledge of the truth, and they send their children to the school, where they learn to read the scriptures, and to pray; so that now they officiate as domestic Chaplains.—*Rev. W. Reve.*

From the Journal of a Missionary.

After preaching in one of my villages one Sunday evening, a young girl returned home with her father and mother. She talked with them of what they had heard and said; that being so invited from time to time, they all ought to attend to their soul's salvation. She then begged her father to pray with them, but the poor man unaccustomed to the exercise, was unable. The girl then prevailed with her father and mother, and brother and sister, to kneel down while she in a simple and delightful manner, poured out her heart

to God in prayer. And it is pleasing to add, that family worship thus begun, is continued in this humble cottage. The daughter referred to, always leading the devotions.

REVIVALS AT SEA.

We have been favored with a copy of a letter from a mercantile gentleman of eminent piety, dated near Calcutta, July 2d, from which we make the following extract. The "signs of the times" clearly indicate that a moral revolution is about to be effected among seamen. A few years ago any project to evangelize seamen would have been treated as the chimera of enthusiasm, and a pious seaman was regarded as a rare phenomenon in the religious world. Now pious seamen are to be found in every port, and every month serves to develop new triumphs of the cross on the ocean. The results of the efforts that have been made form their highest eulogy; one fact like the following is enough to put to flight the cavils of scepticism on this subject, and forever to silence opposition:—*Mar. Mag.*

"Soon after we sailed I found we had a very profane crew. Such horrible depravity as was exhibited during the several first days, I never before witnessed. My feelings were much excited, and I determined on seizing an opportunity of speaking to the crew in a body, and distributing some religious Tracts, and other publications. While looking out for such an opportunity I found a convenient agent in promoting my purposes, in a member of the crew, who, I ascertained, was a sensible and devout Christian. Our designs were soon providentially carried into execution, and, wonderful to tell, were received with great seriousness. Having obtained the

countenance of the captain, I continued to press the subject upon their attention at every opportunity. A great change in the manners of the men was very discoverable, and your heart will burn with gratitude to the Father of all mercies, when I tell you *every individual of the crew is now become either a subject of conviction or of hope!* A more affecting or pleasing scene I think I never witnessed. No other subject, except the greatest of all subjects, is spoken of on board. Some are singing praises, while others are anxiously inquiring the way of salvation. The captain, one of the mates, the cook, and the boy, are among those who are rejoicing in hope. I have not time by the opportunity offered, to enter into details. We have been much favored during the passage with good weather."

FROM THE RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER. HEAVEN, THE CHRISTIAN'S HOME.

'Tis sweet, when we the bosom wrings,
And tears the cheek bedew,
When pain its tort'ring arrow flings,
A Savior's cross to view.

When false the joys of earth have prov'd
And hope deludes no more;
When cold turf hides the friend belov'd,
'Tis sweet our prayer to pour—

Low leaning o'er their grave,—while
Illumes the mourner's eye, [faith
And all around the beds of death
Instruct us where to lie.

'Tis sweet, with penitence to sigh,
And feel our sins forgiven—
Sweet, when the world recedes, to fly,
And find a home in heaven.